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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Tokelau

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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Note: The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 8 December 2016. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available from www.un.org/en/decolonization/workingpapers.shtml.

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The Territory at a glance

Territory: Tokelau is a Non-Self-Governing Territory, as defined under the Charter of the United Nations, administered by New Zealand.

Representative of administering Power: Administrator David Nicholson

Geography: Tokelau comprises three small atolls: Fakaofo, Nukunonu and Atafu. Each atoll comprises strips of land up to 200 m wide and not more than 5 m above sea level. Samoa, located 480 km to the south, is the nearest sizeable neighbour and the principal point of contact for Tokelau with the outside world. Access is possible only by ship, with an average of 30 hours' sailing from Samoa. There is no air service.

Land area: 12.2 km²

Exclusive economic zone: 318,990 km²

Population: 1,499 (October 2016 census), as follows: Atafu — 519, Fakaofo — 448, Nukunonu — 448 and Samoa — 48 (Tokelau Public Service employees and their immediate families). There are 7,176 Tokelauans living in New Zealand (2013 census). As New Zealand citizens, Tokelauans may also reside in Australia.

Life expectancy at birth: 69 1 years (women: 70.4 years; men: 67.8 years (2010-2015 estimates))

Ethnic composition: Tokelauans are Polynesians with linguistic, familial and cultural links with Samoa.

Languages: Tokelauan. English and Samoan are also widely used.

Capital: None. Each atoll has its own administrative centre.

Head of territorial Government: Ulu-o-Tokelau. The position rotates annually among the leaders of each atoll.

Main political parties: None

Elections: Held in January every third year. The most recent election was held on 23 January 2014; the next is due to be held in January 2017.

Legislature: The unicameral General Fono

Economy: The principal sources of revenue are assistance provided by New Zealand through budgetary support and project funding, and fees from fisheries licences.

Monetary unit: New Zealand dollar (SNZ)

Gross domestic product per capita: SNZ 5,050 (*Tokelau Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2015-2016*)

Brief history: Originally inhabited by Polynesians from surrounding islands, Tokelau became a British protectorate in 1889, and in 1925, administration was transferred to New Zealand. By the Tokelau Act 1948, sovereignty over Tokelau was transferred to New Zealand.

I. Constitutional and political developments

A. Local self-governance

1. As previously reported, the current process of constitutional development stems from the 1998 decision of the General Fono (the national representative body) to endorse a comprehensive report entitled "Modern house of Tokelau", which addressed the core issue that faced Tokelau in creating a constitutional framework that suited an atoll- or village-based self-governing community that respected traditional decision-making customs.

2. In accordance with the terms of that report, General Fono delegates are now elected on the basis of proportional village representation, with a system of universal village suffrage rather than of equal village representation with delegates appointed by the respective village councils (taupulega), as was previously the case. In 2004, further decisions were made on the method of appointment of the Chair of the General Fono and on the role and responsibilities of the six-person Council for the Ongoing Government, which is the executive Government when the General Fono is not in session. The Council consists of three faipule (representatives of each village) and one General Fono delegate from each village, designated by the taupulega. The position of Ulu-o-Tokelau, or Head of Government, rotates annually among the three faipule. In February 2016, the Faipule of Fakaofo took over as Ulu-o-Tokelau. In February 2017, the Faipule of Nukunonu is expected to rotate into the position.

3. In its most recent election, on 23 January 2014, Tokelau elected its new General Fono, which represents the three atolls (Fakaofo, Atafu and Nukunonu). In terms of representation in the General Fono, currently Atafu has seven delegates, Nukunonu has six and Fakaofo has seven. It was the first time that the election had been based on common national basic criteria in all three villages. In all, 9 of the 20 positions in the General Fono went to new candidates. Three of the positions are held by women, who each represent the Fatupaepae (Women's Committee) on each atoll. At the time of writing of the present report (mid-January 2017), the next election is scheduled for January 2017, when each atoll will elect five delegates based on population figures from the census held on 18 October 2016 (see para. 23).

4. Since 2004, the three village councils have taken full responsibility for all village public services. That decision emanated from the Modern House of Tokelau approach, whereby the traditional Council of Elders on each atoll serves as the foundation for any future governance structure. Under that arrangement, the councils delegate authority to the General Fono for activities that need to be handled at the national level (see A/AC.109/2005/3). The New Zealand official with principal responsibility for relations with Tokelau is the Administrator of Tokelau. The newly appointed Administrator will be based in Apia, where he will concurrently serve as High Commissioner to Samoa. The Administrator is appointed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand.

5. David Nicholson is the current Administrator and the High Commissioner designate to Samoa (his appointment as Administrator took effect on 28 November 2016, and he will take up his concurrent role as High Commissioner to Samoa). The Office of the Administrator draws on advice and support from the New Zealand

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, including the Special Relations Unit within the Pacific and Development Group.

B. Referendum process

6. In 2003, the General Fono took a formal decision, with the support of all three village councils, to endorse self-government in free association with New Zealand as the choice to be actively explored with the Government of New Zealand. In August 2005, the General Fono approved a draft constitution, as the basis for the proposed act of self-determination, and the text of a draft treaty of free association. In November 2005, the Cabinet of New Zealand gave its formal approval. The referendum package, consisting of the draft treaty and the draft constitution, was to form the basis of the referendum on self-determination. In line with a decision by the General Fono, an overall majority of two thirds of the valid votes cast was required for a change to the status of Tokelau.

7. The first referendum on self-determination was held sequentially in Apia and on the three atolls from 11 to 15 February 2006 (see A/AC.109/2006/20). The outcome fell short of the required two-thirds majority, with 60 per cent of valid Tokelauan votes cast in favour of self-government in free association with New Zealand. The United Nations, which formally monitored the referendum, deemed the process credible and reflective of the will of the people of Tokelau. A representative of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, accompanied by a Political Affairs Officer of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, also observed the referendum process.

8. In August 2006, the General Fono voted to hold a second referendum on Tokelauan self-determination in late 2007. The proposed constitution and the draft treaty, commonly referred to as the self-determination package, were to be the same, and the legal threshold for acceptance of the proposal would remain at a two-thirds majority.

9. The second referendum was held from 20 to 24 October 2007. The result, with 64.4 per cent in favour, was again below the two-thirds threshold, thereby leaving the status of the Territory unchanged (see A/AC.109/2007/19). As with the first referendum, the United Nations formally monitored the voting, with representatives of the Special Committee and the Department of Political Affairs present as observers.

10. Following the results of the second referendum, the General Fono requested the Government of New Zealand to keep on the table the entire self-determination package (namely, the draft treaty and draft constitution that had been agreed upon and had served as the foundation for the previous ballots). The Council for the Ongoing Government noted that Tokelau could in the future change the two-thirds majority threshold for the referendum, but should put in place measures to ensure that a threshold would be supported by a clear majority in each village, to guarantee unity. The Council also noted the Territory's strong commitment to self-determination and its wish to have a constitution, albeit one that did not encompass the provisions for free association and self-government.

11. The outcomes of the referendums, neither of which reached the threshold of support set by the General Fono for a change of status, have been acknowledged and accepted by New Zealand. As a follow-up to the result of the referendum held in 2007, the then Prime Minister of New Zealand met the leaders of Tokelau in February 2008 to discuss the next steps in the New Zealand-Tokelau relationship. It was agreed that a "pause" should be taken in the self-determination efforts of Tokelau and that, in the meantime, Tokelau would focus on meeting its basic needs. That remains the situation.

II. Economic conditions

A. General economic overview

12. Tokelau faces major constraints to its economic growth, including such natural disadvantages as small size, isolation, distances between the atolls, lack of natural resources and natural disasters. The economic stability of the Territory has to date been made possible by the high levels of assistance provided by the administering Power. With the continued assistance of New Zealand, the Council for the Ongoing Government intends to maintain its focus on improving the delivery of core public services (such as education, health and policing) and completing key infrastructure projects, such as schools, hospitals, renewable energy, telecommunications, transport and strengthening the Council and the Tokelau Public Service.

13. As part of the new fisheries policy aimed at maximizing the economic benefits from the sustainable use of its exclusive economic zone, Tokelau has joined the Vessel Day Scheme, a mechanism allowing vessel owners to purchase and trade days fishing at sea in places subject to the Nauru Agreement concerning Cooperation in the Management of Fisheries of Common Interest. The scheme is used to sustainably manage catches of target tuna species and increase the rate of return from fishing activities through access fees paid by distant water fishing nations. At the request of Tokelau, and according to the administering Power, the Administrator is now responsible for the management of the Territory's exclusive economic zone. All the necessary formalities have been concluded in order for the Administrator to manage the zone for the foreseeable future, until Tokelau is in a position to assume that responsibility. In October 2015, the General Fono approved fisheries reforms intended to further improve the administration and management of the Territory's offshore and inshore fisheries. The implementation of the reform programme has begun under the guidance of a fisheries reform steering group comprising representatives of Tokelau, the Office of the Administrator and the New Zealand Ministry of Primary Industries (who provide technical advice to the Administrator).

14. In May 2014, the ninety-second meeting of officials of the Forum Fisheries Council of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency was, for the first time, held in Tokelau. It was followed by the tenth annual ministerial meeting of the Forum Fisheries Committee of the Agency, in July 2014, also held in Tokelau for the first time since the Territory joined the Agency in 2002. Both meetings were the first regional meetings to be held in the Territory. At the ministerial meeting, the participants endorsed a road map, the Atafu Declaration, which culminated in the

ministers signing the Tokelau Arrangement for the Management of the South Pacific Albacore Fishery in December 2014. On 30 November, Tokelau had become the first member of the Agency to sign the Arrangement, which provides a framework for the development of cooperative zone-based management of South Pacific albacore tuna fisheries.

15. Traditional and communal values and practices play a key role in contributing to a state of general well-being in the Territory, as evidenced by the *inati* system and the importance attached to upholding the concept of the family and/or the extended family. The tradition of *inati* requires the deposit at a central location of food and produce, which are then apportioned by the distributors on the basis of "share groups". The principle provides for a secure distribution system that addresses the needs of every member of the community, including older persons, widows, single parents and children.

B. Assistance to Tokelau by the administering Power

16. Assistance is provided through budget support and specific projects. In 2016/17, New Zealand provided $NZ 12 million in general budget support, allocated $NZ 2 million in bilateral funding for technical assistance and infrastructure projects and other funding of $NZ 5.5 million for fisheries management, disaster preparedness and scholarships, and provided assistance from regional agencies and New Zealand partners, including the New Zealand police.

17. The major capital project for the period 2012-2015 was a new passenger cargo ship, the *Mataliki*, for which New Zealand provided $NZ 13 million. The *Mataliki* was handed over to Tokelau in February 2016.

18. The Tokelau International Trust Fund, formally established in November 2004, was designed to provide intergenerational security and an independent source of income to Tokelau in the future. With contributions from Australia, New Zealand, Tokelau and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the level of the Fund as at 31 October 2016 was $NZ 86.9 million.

C. Transport and communications

19. Tokelau has no airstrips. Its transportation needs are met by regular passenger and cargo shipping services from Apia. According to the administering Power and in recognizing that the quality of the transport service linking the atolls and providing contact with Samoa is vital to Tokelau, the Government of New Zealand has gifted Tokelau with the *Mataliki*, a purpose-built vessel that carries up to 60 passengers and essential cargo. New Zealand has also assisted in improving the transfer of passengers and cargo from ship to shore through the provision of new barges, heavy equipment, safety equipment and training. New Zealand is providing support to Tokelau for the upgrading of reef passages and wharf infrastructure.

20. Telecommunications services in Tokelau are provided through the Tokelau Telecommunications Corporation (Teletok). Teletok is installing infrastructure to launch a mobile phone service. New Zealand has provided technical assistance to support Teletok's planning and has offered assistance to develop a detailed plan with

a sound development rationale for New Zealand investing in telecommunications in Tokelau. This intention aligns with the national strategic plan of Tokelau, which identifies that high-quality and affordable Internet services will aid in the development of education, health, governance and the economy.

D. Power supply

21. In 2012, Tokelau became the first area in the world to draw electrical power primarily from solar sources, following the completion of the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project, funded by the Governments of Tokelau and New Zealand. The initiative installed solar photovoltaic systems with large solar arrays on the three atolls.

22. The demand for electricity has grown since 2012. As a result, the Government of Tokelau has funded the expansion of the photovoltaic systems and upgrades of the village distribution networks. As a Pacific island affected by climate change, Tokelau has made a commitment to renewable energy that can serve as an example for the developed world.

III. Social conditions

A. General

23. On 18 October 2016, Statistics New Zealand and the Tokelau Statistics Unit conducted the five-yearly census. The official de jure usually resident population of Tokelau is 1,499. This comprises the usually resident population present on census night (1,197) and the usually resident absentee subpopulation (302). This figure represents a 6.2 per cent increase from the previous census, in 2011. Further census findings will be published on the web page of the Government of Tokelau. The first household income and expenditure survey was also completed in 2016. This survey estimates total annual household income in 2015/16 of $NZ 7 million. Of this, employment accounts for 77.2 per cent, imputed rents for 10 per cent, income from transfers (including remittances, social benefits, pension and scholarships) for 7 per cent and gifts (in kind and remittances) for 5.1 per cent. The survey estimates an average household size of 4.6 people and annual household income of $NZ 6,100. Some 40 per cent of the population of Tokelau is less than 20 years of age, with a median age of 25 years.

B. Education

24. In Tokelau, early childhood, primary and secondary education are free up to year 13 and provided by the three schools in Tokelau, one on each atoll. As an owner of the University of the South Pacific, Tokelau has access to the University's distance-learning foundation course through the University's satellite receiver and centre located on each atoll. The cost of the University's local infrastructure and staff is covered by the Government of Tokelau. According to the administering Power, the Government of Tokelau is investing significantly in its scholarship scheme, which prioritizes study at the University.

25. According to the administering Power, notwithstanding the support for education over many years, education standards on the atolls remain relatively low, according to a report of the Education Review Office of New Zealand published in February 2014. Consequently, with significant financial commitment from New Zealand, Tokelau is carrying out a long-term plan to transform compulsory education with the assistance of the Centre for Educational Development of Massey University. Assistance is focused on the strengthening of school governance and leadership, the professional development of teachers and principals and the improvement of learning outcomes for students. There is evidence of substantial improvements in these areas, but much remains to be done.

26. New schools were completed on Atafu and Fakaofo in 2013 with funding from New Zealand. The exterior of the new school building on Nukunonu is nearing completion, but it could be early 2018 before all its rooms are fully equipped and all classes are held in the new building.

C. Health care

27. According to the administering Power, the provision of adequate health services on three dispersed atolls remains a major challenge. The Department of Health has proposed that the new hospital on Nukunonu be staffed and equipped to expand the health services offered in Tokelau. Nevertheless, the immediate priority agreed upon by the Department and the village councils has been the recruitment of doctors, so that each atoll can have a doctor, and an effective scheme for transferring patients to Apia, Samoa or New Zealand. The construction of a new health clinic on Fakaofo has been delayed by damage to the prefabricated building supplies.

28. The review of health services in Tokelau conducted in 2014 recommended a centralization of services, with a provision for health specialists who would work nationally through the new hospital on Nukunonu and under the Department of Health rather than the village councils. This would be a significant change from the current practice of providing specialist services offshore through the Tokelau Patient Referral Scheme. The Government of Tokelau has a relationship with the National Health Service of Samoa, whereby patients are referred as first port of call. The Department has thus far not persuaded all the village councils that it can recruit the clinicians needed to carry out the recommendations made in the review.

29. The review also recommended placing greater emphasis on promoting good health and improving the capacity of the Tokelau public Health Unit to reduce the threats posed by non-communicable diseases, which are the source of the main burden of diseases and mortality. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand has supported the World Health Organization (WHO) to assist Tokelau with non-communicable disease initiatives. WHO conducted an assessment of the population's health in 2012, and found that low levels of physical activity and poor dietary habits had resulted in obesity in 74.7 per cent of Tokelauans.

30. As indicated in the 2011 census, 46.6 per cent of the population are daily smokers. The New Zealand Volunteer Service Abroad assisted the Department of Health and the villages in developing a tobacco control policy aimed at gradually reducing the quantities of cigarettes shipped to Tokelau. Several rounds of

consultations with the villages resulted in the policy being approved by the General Fono in November 2016.

31. There are initiatives under way to improve education regarding diet and nutrition. A study by the Tokelau Statistics Unit on imports to Tokelau in 2014, completed in 2016, has confirmed high consumption of tobacco, alcohol and sugar. In May 2015, Tokelau was recognized by WHO as part of its "Healthy Islands" initiative for banning the importation of fizzy drinks (although these have been replaced by high-fat chocolate milk), according to the administering Power.

32. Appropriate tools and protocols are in place for early detection of non-communicable diseases and risk factors in all hospitals so that patients receive early support and management, thereby reducing the risk of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases. According to the administering Power, however, significant changes have yet to result. Continuous training, recruitment and retention of health-care professionals are necessary to address those growing problems and present significant challenges.

33. Tokelau has low infant and maternal mortality thanks to the early referral of mothers for maternity care. Antenatal care coverage and coverage for child immunization is 100 per cent.

34. The Government of Tokelau reports that the proportion of the population with access to improved sanitation facilities is 93 per cent and to improved drinking water sources is 97 per cent.

IV. External relations

35. As set out in paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Joint Statement of the Principles of Partnership between Tokelau and New Zealand, Tokelau, as a Non-Self-Governing Territory, does not have an international legal personality separate from that of New Zealand that would allow it to enter into formal international legal obligations as a State in its own right. In consultation with Tokelau, New Zealand is responsible for entering into any such obligations on behalf of Tokelau. Tokelau participates in regional and international organizations in its own right to the extent that such organizations allow.

36. Tokelau is seeking to increase its engagement with regional and international organizations. It is a member of the Pacific Community, the Pacific Community Coastal Fisheries Programme, the Council of the University of the South Pacific, the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency. At the forty-fifth Pacific Islands Forum, held in Koror, Palau, from 29 to 31 July 2014, the participants agreed to admit Tokelau as an associate member. Tokelau is a member of the Pacific Community and the Polynesian Leaders Group and an associate member of WHO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. In addition to having a relationship with New Zealand, Samoa is an important bilateral contact for Tokelau. Tokelau continues to seek the support of New Zealand in gaining access to the Green Climate Fund and other adaptation and mitigation facilities. Representatives of Tokelau attended the twenty-second session

of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as part of the New Zealand delegation.

V. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

37. Speaking at the 8th meeting of the Special Committee, on 21 June 2016, the Ulu-o-Tokelau, Afega Gaualofa, highlighted the importance of climate change to Tokelau, specifically requesting that Tokelau be invited to United Nations meetings on climate change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to ensure that the Tokelau perspective would be heard.

38. He noted that the total aid programme to Tokelau from New Zealand was made up of programme funding for activities focusing on strengthening its public services, improving the quality of life on the atolls and maximizing fisheries revenue.

39. He acknowledged that New Zealand had gifted Tokelau with the *Mataliki*, a vessel specifically designed for Tokelau capable of transporting up to 60 passengers on the international voyage between Samoa and Tokelau and up to 120 passengers between the atolls. The new ship was larger and more efficient than previous vessels owned by Tokelau. New Zealand was also working closely with Tokelau on a ship-to-shore project, which focused on increasing the safety and efficiency of the transfer of passengers and cargoes from the new vessel and other chartered vessels safely ashore.

40. He noted that New Zealand was working with Tokelau to improve the quality of teaching and learning outcomes, with education advisers working in schools and with school management. Tokelau was currently working with New Zealand to extend that programme to the health sector. He also noted that Tokelau and New Zealand were continuing to work together in key areas, including managing the Territory's exclusive economic zone to increase the revenue that Tokelau earned from fisheries while protecting food security, preparing a 30-year asset management plan for public infrastructure and strengthening economic governance.

41. He registered the gratitude of Tokelau to New Zealand for its support, in particular for the journey of Tokelau and its efforts to meet the aspirations of its people for a reliable, strong and brighter future. He extended his thanks to the Special Committee and the United Nations for their interest in the welfare of Tokelau.

42. He reiterated that Tokelau, by virtue of its political status, was not eligible for many of the United Nations climate change development resources. He sought support to assist Tokelau so that the Territory could have access to resources such as the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund to assist in its adaptation to and mitigation of climate change. He noted that the spirit of self-determination was alive in Tokelau and that the Government was determined to establish robust infrastructure that would provide the services that its communities needed. In the discussions on climate change, Tokelau needed to be able to stand with other similar Pacific countries regardless of constitutional status. According to

him, Tokelau wished to assume its obligation and responsibility to fight alongside other nations for the very existence of humanity. The Committee should therefore consider how it could provide practical support to enable Tokelau to participate in United Nations meetings on climate change and oceans.

B. Position of the administering Power

43. Addressing the Special Committee at its 8th meeting, on 21 June 2016, Linda Te Puni, the former Administrator of Tokelau, said that New Zealand continued to work in partnership with the leadership and people of Tokelau. The challenges that the Territory continued to face (isolation and a small population) were unlikely to change, given its position as one of the most geographically isolated communities in the world. The administering Power was committed to the constitutional relationship with the Government and people of Tokelau, and its focus remained on ensuring that all Tokelauans living on the three atolls were receiving essential services. That required continuing dialogue, a substantial level of general budget support and effective responses to the Territory's requests for assistance to improve the quality of life for people living there.

44. She reported on the ceremony held in February 2016 in Apia, at which the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Murray McCully, had handed over the specially designed ship for Tokelau, the *Mataliki*. The total cost of the *Mataliki* had been $NZ 12.95 million. Mr. McCully had described the handover as a milestone in improving the Territory's connectivity with the Pacific region and the wider world.

45. She noted that New Zealand continued to manage the Territory's exclusive economic zone fisheries resource, which was the largest income source for Tokelau. Revenue from fisheries for the year ending April 2016 had been estimated to have reached $NZ 13.4 million. At the request of Tokelau, the Administrator was continuing to manage the Territory's exclusive economic zone in conjunction with Tokelau and with the assistance of the Ministry for Primary Industries of New Zealand. The Administrator would be working closely with Tokelau on a series of fisheries reforms to improve governance and establish a new fisheries management agency for the Territory.

46. She acknowledged the importance to Tokelau of climate change and ocean vulnerability, and explained that New Zealand government agencies had been working with Tokelau on its climate change response plans. New Zealand had facilitated the participation of Tokelau in negotiations through the New Zealand delegation.

47. She recognized that Tokelau was committed to improving its information and telecommunications connectivity. In response, New Zealand had provided technical assistance to Teletok to map out its investment strategy and develop technical specifications for its mobile phone service. New Zealand was offering continuing support to assist Tokelau in reviewing investment options with a view to supporting the Territory's efforts to implement the most appropriate connectivity solution.

48. She noted the recent request from Tokelau for expert technical assistance to enable its Department of Finance to strengthen public financial management. In response, New Zealand would commit funding to a three-year programme of

assistance and capacity-building. The initial focus was on assisting Tokelau to prepare medium-term budget forecasts and its budget for 2016/17, including national infrastructure asset maintenance and renewal.

49. She also noted that the bilateral allocation by New Zealand of $NZ 14.1 million in 2016/17 had been supplemented by non-bilateral funding of $NZ 5.5 million for fisheries management, disaster preparedness, scholarships and assistance from regional agencies and New Zealand partners, including the New Zealand police.

50. She further noted that New Zealand continued to support the Territory's current focus on providing core services and improving the quality of life of its people while it remained paused in its self-determination efforts, as had been the case since the referendums to change its status in 2006 and 2007 did not achieve the required majority set by the leaders of Tokelau. New Zealand respected the pace that Tokelau alone wished to set as it developed towards the future of its choosing.

51. She noted that New Zealand continued to value its close association with Tokelau and was resolute in supporting such remote communities of New Zealand citizens.

VI. Consideration by the United Nations

A. Consideration of the question of Tokelau by the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

52. The Special Committee considered the question of Tokelau at its 8th meeting, on 21 June 2016. The representative of Papua New Guinea, also on behalf of Fiji, introduced draft resolution A/AC.109/2016/L.25, which the Special Committee adopted without a vote. The representative of Fiji made a statement (see A/AC.109/2016/SR.8).

B. Consideration of the question of Tokelau by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

53. At its 7th meeting, on 10 October 2016, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee adopted without a vote draft resolution VI (see A/71/23, chap. XIII) on the question of Tokelau.

C. Action taken by the General Assembly

54. At its 71st plenary meeting, on 6 December 2016, the General Assembly adopted without a vote resolution 71/107 on the question of Tokelau. In that resolution, the Assembly:

(a) Acknowledged the decision of the General Fono in 2008 that consideration of any future act of self-determination by Tokelau would be deferred

and that New Zealand and Tokelau would devote renewed effort and attention to ensuring that essential services and infrastructure on the atolls of Tokelau were enhanced and strengthened, thereby ensuring an enhanced quality of life and opportunities for the people of Tokelau;

(b) Welcomed the progress made towards the devolution of power to the three taupulega (village councils) since 2004, and noted that further discussion was planned on the recommendations in the report on the devolution review, compiled in 2012;

(c) Noted with appreciation that Tokelau and New Zealand remained firmly committed to the ongoing development of Tokelau for the long-term benefit of the people of Tokelau, with particular emphasis on the further development of facilities on each atoll that would meet their current requirements;

(d) Recalled the adoption by Tokelau of its National Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 and that the Joint Commitment for Development between Tokelau and New Zealand 2011-2015 prioritized four main development pillars, including good governance, infrastructure development, human resources capacity development and sustainable development;

(e) Acknowledged the ongoing and consistent commitment of New Zealand to meeting the social and economic requirements of the people of Tokelau, including with the completion of the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project and a new shipping charter service, as well as the support and cooperation of the United Nations Development Programme and WHO;

(f) Commended the achievement by Tokelau in 2013 of 60 per cent of the objectives of its National Strategic Plan, including the completion of the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project with the support of the administering Power and receipt by the Government of the Renewable Energy Award granted by the New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority;

(g) Acknowledged the need of Tokelau for continued support from the international community and its desire to become part of the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda, the impacts of climate change and the protection of the environment and oceans;

(h) Noted the intention of Tokelau to further review its National Strategic Plan in order to determine development and other priorities beyond 2015 and to include consideration of the issue of self-determination and how the Territory would address a possible referendum on self-determination in cooperation with the administering Power;

(i) Recalled with satisfaction the establishment and operation of the Tokelau International Trust Fund to support the ongoing needs of Tokelau, and called upon Member States and international and regional agencies to contribute to the Fund and thereby lend practical support to Tokelau in overcoming the problems of smallness, isolation and lack of resources;

(j) Welcomed the cooperative attitude of the other States and territories in the region towards Tokelau and their support for its economic and political aspirations and its increasing participation in regional and international affairs, and in that regard noted the successful chairmanship by Tokelau in 2014 of the tenth

annual ministerial meeting of the Forum Fisheries Committee of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, held in Tokelau on 1 and 2 July 2014, and the representation of the Agency by the Ulu-o-Tokelau at the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in Apia from 1 to 4 September 2014, and the signing by Tokelau of the Pacific Islands Development Forum Charter on 27 April 2016 so as to become the twelfth member of the Forum;

(k) Called upon the administering Power and United Nations agencies to continue to provide assistance to Tokelau as it further developed;

(l) Recognized the positive actions taken by the administering Power to transmit to the Secretary-General under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations information regarding the political, economic and social situation of Tokelau;

(m) Commended the commitment of both Tokelau and New Zealand to continuing to work together in the interests of Tokelau and its people;

(n) Requested the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of Tokelau and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session.

55. At its 53rd plenary meeting, on 6 December 2016, the General Assembly also adopted resolution 71/122 on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, paragraph 7 of which refers to Tokelau.